MARION COUNTY COMMISSION ON YOUTH

MCCOY

2026 PUBLIC POLICY AGENDA

Guiding MCCOY's advocacy efforts to improve the lives of children and families in Indiana.

Through research, coalition-building, and direct engagement with policymakers, MCCOY advocates for equitable opportunities, safe environments, and supportive systems that help all young people **learn, grow, and thrive.**

www.mccoyouth.org/advocacy

Building A BETTER FUTURE FOR YOUTH

1.5M Approximate number of children living in Indiana, with 15% of the population living in Marion County.
Source: US Census, 2019-2023

Children Living in Poverty
US Census, 2019-2023

1:4 Indiana youth face mental, emotional, or behavioral challenges, with 30% reporting persistent sadness.
US Census, 2019-2023

Half of justice-involved youth in Indianapolis are caught in both the child welfare and juvenile justice systems
Administration for Children & Families

2022 Child Dependency Ratio
EIPC Where the Children Are Report

This ratio is a relative indicator of the level of investment required in Marion County for services in support of children.

Promote data-driven policies, cross-sector collaboration, and whole-community solutions that tackle the underlying factors affecting youth.

Invest in family stability by expanding affordable housing, childcare, transportation, and essential programs that create long-term security and opportunity for youth and families.

Build safe and nurturing communities by advancing gun safety, supporting violence prevention, and creating spaces where youth can grow and thrive.

Expand pathways to opportunity and leadership through career training, service programs, and postsecondary options that foster independence and civic engagement.

Prioritize youth health and well-being through preventative care, comprehensive health education, and accessible mental health supports for all young people.

Investing IN SYSTEMS THAT SUPPORT YOUTH

School Performance

30% of county schools are under performing

Indiana Department of Education

40% Of Indiana's children aged 3-4 are enrolled in an early education program, well below the national average.

US Census, 2019-2023

5 in 6 parents who want an after-school program can't find one, due to cost, transportation, or lack of options.

Indiana DOE

30,000+

Since January 2025, CCDF waitlists have left 30,000 children behind and new CCDF reimbursement changes are costing Marion County child care and after-school programs $1.4M weekly.

Early Learning Indiana

Youth-Services Employee Needs Survey, 2025

When asked what resources would help them be more effective in your role, 53.1% of youth workers said they need mental health training or tools.

MCCOY Youth-Services Employee Needs Survey

- Expand access to affordable, high-quality childcare and reduce CCDF waitlists to ensure all families can access early learning and care.
- Strengthen collaboration across sectors and invest in coordinated systems, backbone organizations, and shared data to align education, health, and community services.
- Support the development of lasting out-of-school programs and community spaces that support families and promote learning, mental health, and resilience.
- Promote policies, staff training, and evidence-based programs that promote inclusive, affirming, and safe schools for all students.
- Ensure state-funded programs are inclusive, accessible, data-driven, and equipped to close opportunity gaps.

Championing THE WORKFORCE THAT SERVE YOUTH

1.5M Indiana youth development professionals impact more than 1.5 million Hoosier children each year.

Indiana Youth Institute

Minimum Teacher Salary

Senate Enrolled Act 146

The minimum teacher salary in Indiana is now $45,000, an increase from the previous $40,000.

Estimated living wage **$63,090**

Average starting salary **$45,000**

The average teacher's pay in Indiana falls short of the threshold for basic economic security, according to the National Teacher's Association.

Youth Worker Well-Being Project

$2.5M 2025 YTD, $2.5M in health care expenses savings
~13,000 youth workers are currently enrolled

66% of youth workers feel burned out working with youth.

CYC Youth Worker Survey, 2021

Child per counselor ratio in Indiana schools is 1:494.

Afterschool Alliance

- Support policies that reduce burnout and turnover through manageable workloads, mental health supports, family-friendly policies, and inclusive workplace practices.
- Invest in competitive pay and quality benefits to make youth-serving careers sustainable and attractive.
- Promote accessible, equity-focused credentialing pathways that recognize lived experience and support advancement for diverse youth-serving professionals.
- Ensure workforce policies and practices advance diversity, inclusion, and collaboration across education, health, and youth-serving systems.
- Sustain ongoing professional development focused on trauma-informed care, cultural competency, mental health, and youth engagement.

COALITION MEMBERSHIP

Our advocacy work at MCCOY is strengthened and sustained through collaboration with key advocacy coalitions.

These critical groups are comprised of organizations from all over the state and country who share a common goal to promote policy changes that improve the lives of children and families and support the youth worker community.

PARTNERSHIP FOR AMERICA'S CHILDREN
Connecting, strengthening, and inspiring state and local child advocates

INDIANA COALITION FOR YOUTH JUSTICE
A COLLABORATION FOR CHANGE

ICHS
INDIANA COALITION FOR HUMAN SERVICES

INDIANA EDUCATIONAL EQUITY COALITION

Time Matters Indiana

EARLY EDUCATION WORKS

YOUTH DAY AT THE STATEHOUSE
MCCOY

Save the date

President's Day
February 16, 2026

Join youth from all over Indiana at the Statehouse to learn about the legislative process and to hear their ideas on public policy.

SUBSCRIBE TO THE STATEHOUSE SOUND-OFF

This weekly newsletter provides updates during Indiana's legislative session on bills passing through the Statehouse that impact Hoosier children, families, and the youth worker community.

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